

Serial No.: 09/683,380
Attorney Docket No.: F-441

Patent

REMARKS**1. Status of the Claims**

Claims 1 -20 were currently pending in the Application. Applicants have amended claims 1, 4 and 15, canceled claims 18-20 without prejudice or disclaimer and added new claims 21 and 22. Applicants respectfully request entry of the above amendments and consideration of the enclosed remarks. Applicants submit that no new matter is added. Accordingly, claims 1-17 and 21-22 will remain pending in the application.

2. Restriction Requirement

On page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner requires election as between Group I and II. While Applicants respectfully submit that the Groups could be examined in one application, Applicants elect to prosecute Group I. Accordingly, Applicants have canceled claims 19-20 without prejudice or disclaimer.

3. Claim Rejections Under 35 USC Section 112

On page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claim 15 for allegedly being indefinite. Applicants have amended claim 15 as suggested for cosmetic reasons and respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection.

4. Double Patenting Rejection

On page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 4-12 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as allegedly unpatentable over claims 1-8 of U.S. patent no. 6,754,366. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. However, Applicants have amended claim 4 and submit that the rejection is moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection.

(10029545.1)

Serial No.: 09/683,380
Attorney Docket No.: F-441

Patent

5. Rejections under 35 USC § 102

Starting on page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-17 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by Sansone (U.S. Published Patent Application No. 2002/0141613A1) as described in the November 20, 2003 Office Action.

Starting on page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-17 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by Tsikos, et al. (U.S. Published Patent Application No. 2003/0062414A1) as described in the November 20, 2003 Office Action.

Starting on page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-2 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by Call, et al. (U.S. Published Patent Application No. 2002/0124664A1) as described in the November 20, 2003 Office Action.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections. However, solely in order to expedite prosecution, Applicants have amended claims 1 and 4 to include limitations similar to those of prior claim 18 that the Examiner has indicated is allowable.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection is moot and request early and favorable consideration of the invention as presently claimed in claims 1-17. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection to claims 1-17.

6. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the indication of allowance of claim 18. Applicants have amended claims 1 and 4 to include similar limitations.

7. New Claims

Applicants submit that new claims 21 and 22 are patentable over the cited references and in condition for allowance.

Serial No.: 09/683,380
Attorney Docket No.: F-441

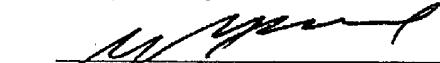
Patent

8. Authorization

No additional fee is believed due with this Amendment. However, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for the response or credit any overpayment to the Pitney Bowes, Inc. Deposit Account Number 16-1885, Order No. F-441.

In the event that an extension of time or additional extension of time is required to make this response timely filed, the Commissioner is requested to grant a petition for that extension of time which is required to make this response timely. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fee for such an extension of time or credit any overpayment for an extension of time to the Pitney Bowes, Inc. Deposit Account Number 16-1885, Order No. F-441.

Respectfully submitted,


George M. Macdonald
Reg. No. 39,284
Attorney of Record
Telephone (203) 924-3180
PITNEY BOWES INC.
Intellectual Property and Technology Law Department
35 Waterview Drive, P.O. Box 3000
Shelton, CT 06484-8000

(10029545.1)

- 8 -

8/11/04 Amendment